

## Quick Facts UPDATE

### Text to Speech and Read Aloud Accommodations Guidance

#### February 2016

The decision to provide an IEP or 504 student in **grades 3-5** with text-to-speech or human read-aloud accommodations for the **English Language Arts (ELA) reading assessment passages** is a significant decision, one that has possible long-term implications for the child. These **accommodations** are defined as follows:

**Text-to-speech:** Text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. The student is able to control the speed as well as raise or lower the volume of the voice via a volume control.

**Read aloud:** Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the *Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual* and *Read Aloud Protocol* in the *Manual's* appendix. Readers may read aloud some or all of the content to students.

The decision to provide a student in grades 3-5 with text-to-speech or a human read-aloud accommodation for the ELA reading assessment passages must be made with extreme care. The questions included in Table 1 should be used to help inform that decision. Only when a preponderance of the information obtained from responses to the questions reflect a need for either text-to-speech or read aloud, should the accommodation be provided.

The questions indicate several types of data that should be collected and documented about the student in **grades 3-5** who is being considered for the text-to-speech or read aloud accommodation. Document the following:

- Nature and duration of targeted interventions provided to the student to improve decoding, fluency, or comprehension skills
- Evidence of improvement or non-improvement following each targeted intervention
- Student performance with and without either text-to-speech or read aloud

One way to document student performance with and without the accommodation is to have the student respond to a simple reading achievement test or to Smarter Balanced practice items with and without the accommodation. The testing dates and student performance under each condition should be documented.

Table 1. Documentation of Possible Need for Text-to-Speech or Read Aloud Accommodations for ELA Reading Passages for Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-5

<b>Student Name:</b> _____			
<b>Teacher:</b> _____			
<p>Responses in <b>shaded boxes may</b> indicate a need for the text-to-speech or read aloud accommodation. A <b>preponderance of evidence</b> should exist rather than one or two marks in shaded boxes for the accommodation to be provided to a student in grades 3-5 for ELA reading passages.</p>			
Question <sup>a</sup>	Yes	No	Comments
Is this student blind or does this student have a significant visual impairment?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the student is blind or has a significant visual impairment, is the student learning to read braille?</li> </ul>			
Does this student have a identified reading-based disability that affects the student's decoding, fluency, or comprehension skills?			Describe skills affected.
Have interventions been used to improve the student's decoding, fluency, or comprehension skills?			Describe approaches.
Does the student use text-to-speech or receive a read aloud accommodation during instruction?			
Does the student belong to Bookshare or a similar organization?			
Does the student regularly use assistive technology software or audio books?			
Does the student use text-to-speech or receive a read aloud accommodation during formative assessments or during other <i>Smarter Balanced</i> tests?			
Does someone (teacher, paraprofessional, another student, parent) regularly read aloud to the student in school?			
<b>Student Input:</b>			
Did the student indicate he or she reads to himself or herself when at home, and that it is because he or she has trouble reading?			
Does the student indicate that it is <b>easier</b> to understand a book when it is read to him or her through text-to-speech or by another person?			
Does the student indicate that given the choice, he or she would prefer to read tests himself or herself?			